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SOURCE As indicated

USSR HOUSING CONSTRUCTION UP TO MARCH 1954

[Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

Officials Attest to Critical Shortage of Housing

On 11 March 1954, L. M. Kaganovich, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers USSR stated, "I think that I am correct in saying that of all our needs, the greatest is housing. The party and the government will see that this problem is resolved as quickly as possible." (1) On 12 March 1954, G. M. Malenkov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers USSR, said, "During the last few years housing construction has been considerably expanded. However, our need for housing is still very great. ... We will increase housing construction in every way possible." (2) In April 1954, A. F. Zverev, Minister of Finance USSR, reported that the government was planning a large program of housing construction in 1954; 25.5 billion rubles were to be appropriated for state housing construction. (3) In 1953 appropriations for this purpose amounted to 19.4 billion rubles. (4)

The greatest need for housing is felt in the cities whose population by 1953 had tripled since 1926 and had increased more than 30 percent since 1940. In the Fifth Five-Year Plan, capital investments for housing are to be twice the amount spent for housing construction in the Fourth Five-Year Plan. New residential buildings with a total living space of 105 million square meters are to be built by the state in cities and workers' settlements. (5)

Urban Housing Construction in USSR, 1946-1953

[The following table shows housing built in cities and workers' settlements of the USSR by state organizations, institutions and enterprises, local soviets, and, probably, by individuals as well. Housing construction figures given for the Fourth Five-Year Plan include restored housing as well as new construction.]

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<u>Year</u>	<u>Millions of Square Meters of Living Space Built</u>
1946	
1947	
1948	51 (6)
1949	
1950	21 (7)
1951	24*
1952	27 (8)
1953	27 (9)
	28 (10)

\*Computed on the basis of the statement that 106 million square meters of living space were built in cities and workers' settlements from 1950 through 1953.(11)

Per Capita Urban Living Space in the USSR

[The following table presents computed data (last column) on the number of square meters of urban living space available in the USSR per urban inhabitant. The term urban is defined to include cities and workers' settlements. The years which appear in this table were selected because data on both total USSR urban population and total square meters of urban living space in the USSR for these years were, for the most part, given in Soviet sources. Where it has been necessary to compute a figure, the method of computation has been explained in a footnote.]

<u>Year</u>	<u>Urban Population (in millions)</u>	<u>Square Meters of Urban Living Space (in 1,000)</u>	<u>Square Meters of Living Space per Capita</u>
1923	17 (12)	152,721*	9
1926	26 (14)	159,000 (15)	6.12
1928	27.6 (16)	162,460 (17)	5.88
1932	38.7 (16)	185,060 (17)	4.79
1939	55.9 (18)	About 225,000 (15)	4.03
1949	61 (18)	274,000**	4.67
1953	80 (14)	380,000**	4.75

\*\*This figure has been computed from information on the period 1939-1945 and from information on the postwar years contained in the table above on Urban Housing Construction in the USSR, 1946-1953. Since no allowance for depreciation of previously built housing was made when adding newly constructed living space, this total is probably in excess of actual space available at the time.

- 2 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-LRural Housing Construction, 1946-1953

[The following table shows rural housing construction which is tabulated by the number of houses built rather than by square meters of living space. It is believed that the greater part of rural housing construction is done on an individual basis.]

<u>Postwar Period</u>	<u>No of Houses Built</u>
1946-1953*	4,000,000 (1)
1946-1951	3,000,000 (19)
1950-1953	1,600,000 (20)
<u>Fourth Five-Year Plan</u>	2,700,000 (21)
1946-1949	2,300,000 (7)
<u>Fifth Five-Year Plan</u>	
1951-1952	770,000 (22)
1951	400,000 (8)
1952	370,000 (9)
1953	400,000 (10)

\*Source gives figures for the "postwar" years.

Individual Housing Construction

From 1939 through 1952, 23,526,000 square meters of living space were put into operation and during that time 6,556,000,000 rubles were loaned to individual builders through the Tsekbank (Tsentral'nyy bank finansirovaniya zhilishchnogo i kommunal'nogo stroitel'stva, Central Bank for Financing Residential and Municipal Construction) alone.(23)

From 1939 through 1953, 25,645,000 square meters of living space were built in cities and workers' settlements in the USSR. During that time 7,183,000,000 rubles were loaned to workers in state credits. In comparison with 1939 when state credits for individual housing construction were first made available, individual housing construction by 1954 had increased 10 times. Fifty million rubles are to be allotted by the state for capital repair of individual homes in 1954.(24)

Housing Construction by Ministries

## 1. All-Union Ministries

Workers of the Ministry of Coal Industry USSR were to receive 2 million square meters of living space in 1953.(25) From 1951 through 1953, more than 4 million square meters of living space were built and put into use in the Ministry of Coal Industry USSR. In 1954, the ministry is to invest 36 percent

- 3 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

more than in 1953 on housing construction; 2,100,000 square meters are to be put into use in 1954 which is 48 percent more than in 1953.(26)

Capital investments in housing construction under the Ministry of Communications from 1951 through 1953 totaled 165.2 million rubles, exceeding by 70 million rubles the investments during the entire Fourth Five-Year Plan. Each communications administration is responsible for housing in its own sector.(27)

From March 1951 through March 1954, workers of the Ministry of Construction USSR received more than 1.5 million square meters of living space.(28)

During 1952 and 1953, 2,221 million rubles were spent on housing construction under the Ministry of Electric Power Stations and Electrical Industry USSR.(29) In 1953, 308,000 square meters of living space were to be built by this ministry.(30)

In 1954, 459,000 square meters of living space are to be built under the Ministry of Machine Building USSR.(31)

In 1952, the Ministry of Maritime and River Fleet USSR put 52,600 square meters less living space into operation than in 1953.(32) By the beginning of December 1953, the Ministry of Maritime and River Fleet USSR had put only 125,000 square meters of living space into use although the 1953 plan called for 225,000 square meters.(33) In 1954, more than 250,000 square meters of living space are to be put into use by this ministry.(34) In 1953, workers of the Ministry of Maritime and River Fleet USSR received 211,700 square meters of living space. In 1954, 100 million rubles in addition to the plan are to be invested in housing construction under the ministry to build a total of 310,000 square meters of living space.(35)

The Ministry of Petroleum Industry USSR did not fulfill its plan to build 170,000 square meters of living space in 1953.(36)

In 1953, the Ministry of Railways USSR was to build 1.5 times more living space than in 1952; in addition workers of the ministry were to build more than 7,000 individual homes.(37)

The plan for housing and cultural construction under the Ministry of Transport and Heavy Machines Building USSR was not fulfilled in 1953 by 140,000 square meters of living space.(28)

## 2. Union-Republic Ministries

In 1954, the Ministry of Agriculture USSR is to put more than 1.2 million square meters of living space into use, five times more than the amount actually completed in 1953; 1,000 dormitories and 3,600 residential buildings are to be put into use for MTS workers in 1954.(38) Almost seven times more living space is to be built at MTS in 1954 than was actually completed in 1953.(29) During 1954 and 1955, 10,800 residential buildings and 3,000 dormitories are to be built at MTS. For each year, 450 million rubles are to be appropriated for individual housing construction at MTS.(39)

In 1953, the Ministry of Consumer Goods Industry USSR fulfilled the plan for putting living space into use by 85.3 percent.(36) In 1954, 685,000 square meters of living space are to be built by the Ministry of Consumer Goods Industry USSR.(31)

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

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More than 600 million rubles were allotted for the construction of housing and cultural and public services buildings by the Ministry of Construction Materials Industry USSR in 1953.(40) The 1954 plan for housing includes more than 226,000 square meters to be put into use at union level enterprises of the construction materials industry.(41)

In 1953, the Ministry of Food Products Industry USSR fulfilled the plan for putting living space into use by 73.4 percent in 1953.(36)

In 1954, 400,000 square meters of living space are to be built in sovkhoses [Ministry of State Farms USSR?].(39)

Cost of Housing Construction

In March 1954, Literaturnaya Gazeta reported that prevailing housing designs made construction costs so high that in Moscow and many other cities the cost of building a square meter of living space had gone up to 2,200 rubles.(42) [In the following two tables the cost per square meters (right-hand column) is based on or computed from data in the left-hand column.]

Cost of Housing Construction (Actual)

<u>Data</u>	<u>Cost (rubles per sq m)</u>
In May 1954, it was reported that construction organizations in Turkmen SSR did not stay within the established estimate cost of a square meter of living space. The actual cost per square meter exceeded 2,000 rubles and in some cases even 3,000 rubles.(43)	2,000-3,000
During 1951 and 1952, capital investments for housing construction in Baku amounted to more than 255 million rubles. Residents received more than 115,000 square meters of living space during that time.(5)	2,217
In 1952, capital investments for housing construction in Minsk amounted to 166 million rubles. In that year, 86,700 square meters of living space were built there.(44)	1,915
In 1952 and 1953, 4.9 billion rubles were spent on housing construction in cities and workers' settlements of the Ukraine SSR. In those 2 years, 2.9 million square meters of living space were put into use.(45)	1,690
From 1951 through 1953, more than 951 million rubles were spent in the Belorussian SSR on housing construction; during that time about 600,000 square meters of living space were put into use.(46)	1,585
From 1949 through 1953, the state spent 930 million rubles for housing construction in Kiev; during that time about 600,000 square meters of living space were put into operations.(47)	1,550

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

<u>Data</u>	<u>Cost (rubles per sq m)</u>
In June 1953, it was reported that in the preceding 2 years 14,000 square meters of living space had been put into use at stations and workers' settlements along the Turkestan-Siberia Railway System; 18 million rubles had been spent for construction.(48)	1,286

## Costs of Housing Construction (Planned)

<u>Data</u>	<u>Cost (rubles per sq m)</u>
In 1953, 1,910 million rubles were appropriated for housing construction in Moscow; this was 300 million more than were appropriated in 1952.(49) In 1952, 750,000 square meters of living space were to be built in Moscow.(50) In 1953, 800,000 square meters were to be built in the city.(51)	2,147 2,387

An apartment house in Moscow was being planned in August 1953 for workers of the Electrical Heating Equipment Plant. It was to have 7,727 square meters of living space and the estimated cost of construction was 16,731,000 rubles.(52)	2,178
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In February 1954, 3 five-storied residential buildings with 6,100 square meters of living space were under construction in Yerevan, 11,600,000 rubles were assigned for their construction.(53)	1,919
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Because of earthquakes and other problems that complicate construction in Turkmen SSR, the cost of one square meter of living space in May 1954 was set at 1,800 rubles, which was considerably higher than the figure established for other republics.(43)	1,800
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In Minsk, 190 million rubles were to be spent on building 110,000 square meters of living space in 1953.(44)	1,727
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In Stalingrad in 1954, 240,000,000 rubles are to be spent on the construction and completion of 150,000 square meters of living space.(31)	1,600
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Capital investments for housing in Baku were to be 175,536,000 rubles in 1953. It was planned to build 110,000 square meters of living space.(54)	1,595
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In 1953, workers of the Ministry of Light Industry Belorussian SSR were to receive about 11,000 square meters of living space. The ministry assigned more than 14 million rubles for their construction.(55)	1,273
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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-LDataCost (rubles per sq m)

In 1953, 13,000 square meters of housing were to be built along the Turkestan-Siberia Railway System and 16 million rubles were appropriated for their construction.(48)

1,230

Current Problems in Housing Construction

In a meeting called by the editors of Literaturnaya Gazeta to discuss problems in housing construction the following criticisms were made by leading architects and builders:

Most complaints from residents concern poor planning, use of cheap materials, and lack of soundproofing in apartments. Too many apartments are designed for several families. More apartments should be designed with one large room, 18-20 square meters in size, and two or three smaller rooms, 10-12 square meters in size to accommodate the needs of single family units. Builders choose wallpaper designs more with an eye to hiding uneven walls than to good taste. Parquet floors are often made from green wood. When the wood warps, asphalt oozes through the cracks.

Housing construction costs could be lowered greatly. If, instead of parquet flooring, linoleum were used to cover floors, the cost of a square meter of living space would be reduced tens of rubles. Stainless steel bathtubs, which cost one-quarter as much as enamel bathtubs, could be used. If bathrooms were built next to the entrance hall instead of in the center of the apartment, the cost of wasted space of the passage to the bathroom could be eliminated. Ornamental decoration on the exterior of buildings raises the cost of a square meter of living space 150-180 rubles. The cost of a square meter of living space increases 25 to 30 percent when an apartment house is ten or more stories high.

It is possible to industrialize construction only by mass production of building items. The Kuchino Ceramic Block Facing Plant in Moskovskaya Oblast could produce 1,500,000 square meters of standard tile; actually, the plant produces one-tenth this amount because each architect specifies a different style and size. Design Institute No 2 of the Ministry of Construction has worked out standard plans for four- and five-storied houses requiring a minimum of building items. According to estimates, a square meter of living space in such a house should not exceed 1,000 rubles.

Since plan fulfillment is measured in square meters of living space both architects and builders favor apartments with one large room per family over one-family apartments with one, two and three smaller rooms. [Living space does not include kitchens, bathrooms, halls, storage space, etc.] In Moscow 117 dormitories have been built and more are under construction. Five hundred people can live in each dormitory. Such accommodations deprive many people of the conveniences of an apartment simply because plan fulfillment is computed by square meters of living space rather than by number of apartments.

As long as housing construction is broken up into sectors, as long as it remains in the hands of several governmental departments, and is less mechanized and less organized than large industrial projects, efficiency and high quality cannot be expected.

At present there is no coordination by the Ministry of Construction, by scientific research organizations, or by the Academy of Architecture USSR over the work of specialists in their respective fields.(42)

- 7 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Miscellaneous Construction Items

In April 1954, it was reported that the natural growth in population in Kazan' required that 80,000 square meters of living space be built there each year. But, from 1950 to 1953, only 33,000 to 35,000 square meters of living space were actually put into use yearly.(56) By 1954, the population of Riga had increased considerably in comparison with 1940, but the amount of housing available in the city increased by only 15,000 square meters of living space during that time.(57)

In March 1954, 30 percent of the new construction sites in Kishinev were not supplied with technical documentation [blueprints, estimates, etc.]. Housing construction in the city was badly planned. Construction organizations were in need of the same type of labor at the same time. Construction materials were of low quality and were neither delivered in sufficient quantity nor on time. Personnel was poorly trained and, in addition, there was a complete turnover of labor every year.(58)

In 1954, lack of a labor force was still delaying reconstruction of Ashkhabad [following the earthquake in 1948]; of 4,450 men hired for work in construction organizations, 3,743 were dismissed.(59) From 1949 through 1953, there was a turnover of eight chiefs and eight chief engineers in Trust No 1 of the Ministry of Construction in Ashkhabad. In Trust No 3, there was a turnover of three chiefs and seven chief engineers.(60) From 1949 through 1953, only 270,000 square meters of living space were built in Ashkhabad and Ashkhabadskiy and Geok-Tepinskiy Rayons instead of the planned 525,000 square meters. As a result, about 40 percent of the population was living in temporary dwellings in February 1954.(59)

A shortage of large enterprises for manufacturing prefabricated building items in January 1954 was delaying industrialization of the construction industry. The cost of manufactured building items was very high.(61) In January 1954, expenditures for building materials in the construction industry comprised over 60 percent of total construction costs.(62)

In 1953, measures were being taken to consolidate construction organizations in Leningrad. Among the construction organizations served by the Prombank (Industrial Bank of the USSR) in Leningrad were more than 100 small organizations with a yearly volume of work amounting to nearly 15 million rubles. These small organizations were poorly run and used outdated methods. In such organizations, 20 administrative people were often necessary for each 100 workers.(63)

In Leningrad the plan for putting living space into use is chiefly realized in the second half of the year. In 1952, 5 percent of the year's total construction was done in the first quarter, 18 percent in the second quarter, 37 percent in the third quarter, and 40 percent in the fourth quarter of the year. In 1953, 45.9 percent of the year's plan for putting living space into use was carried out in December.(64)

In 1954, the enterprises of the Ministry of Timber and Paper Industry USSR are to manufacture wood prefabricated building items for residential buildings with a total living space of 100,000 square meters.(65)

In 1948, 2,917 workdays were spent on the construction of each square meter of living space, while in 1952 only 12.5 workdays were spent. The cost of housing and civil construction in Moscow in 1952 was 35 percent lower than in 1948.(66)

Losses due to overexpenditure of funds and expenditures not entering into production in the Ministry of Construction amounted to 725 million rubles in 1952.(67) In 1951, overhead expenses in construction exceeded the plan by more than

- 8 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L



50X1-HUM

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

one billion rubles; instead of a profit of 2.9 billion rubles as envisaged in the plan, construction organizations operated with a loss of 2.5 billion rubles.(13)

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- 9 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

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- 10 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

50X1-HUM

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

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50X1-HUM

- 11 -

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L